
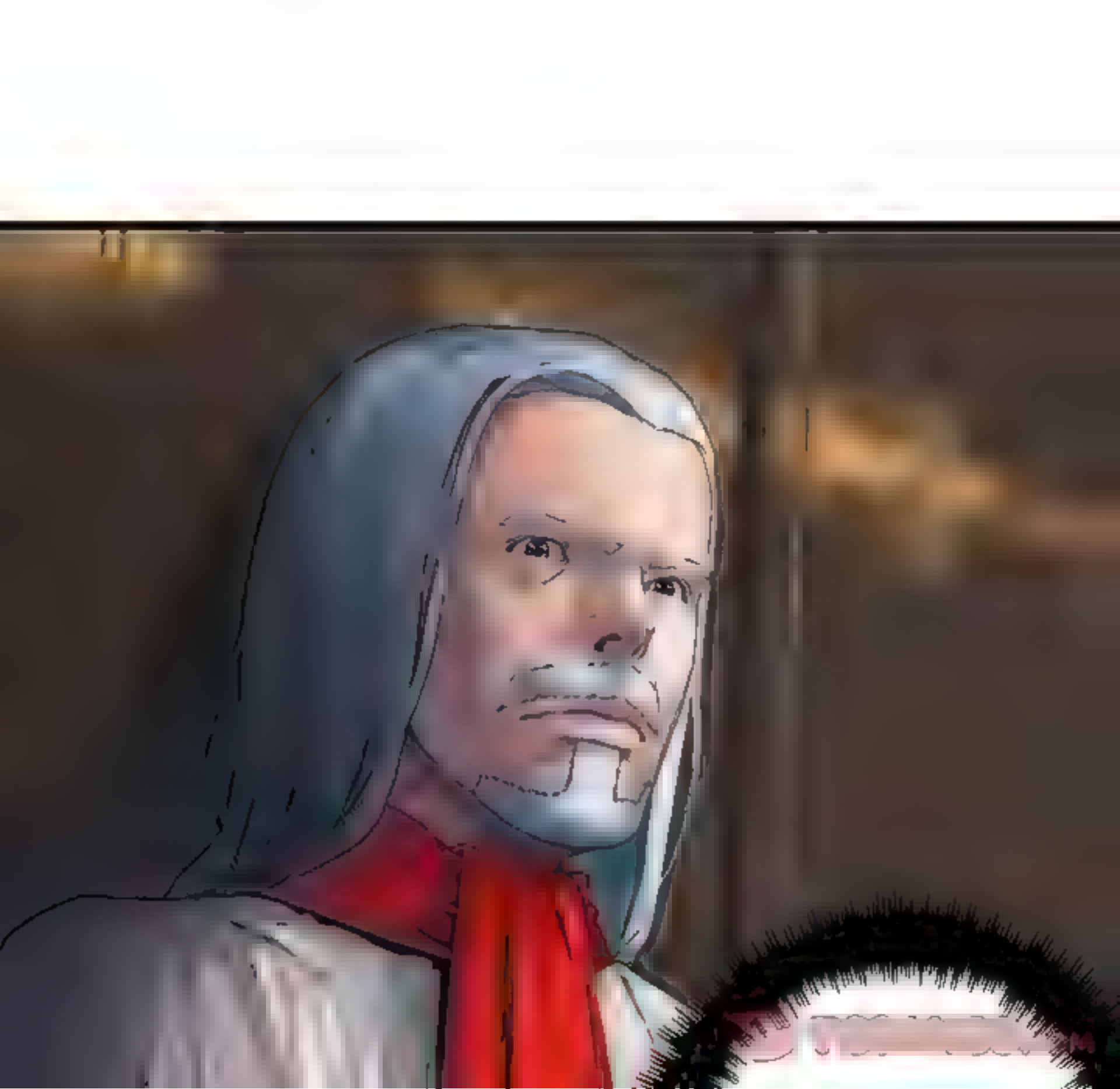



IF I DON'T
SPEAK THE
TRUTH...

EYA SAID
SHE'D TAKE
AI'S SOUL.

A comic book panel featuring three characters in the background. On the left is a man with a beard and a dark tunic. In the center is a woman with long blonde hair wearing a red and white tunic. On the right is a woman with dark hair wearing a green and white tunic. They are all looking towards the right. In the foreground, a large, circular, white speech bubble with a black, spiky border contains the text. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting an outdoor setting at night or in a dimly lit area.

BUT IF I TELL
THEM THAT THIS
KINGDOM MUST BE
DESTROYED...





AI WILL
DEFINITELY BE
CHARGED WITH
TREASON OR BE
TREATED AS A
DEMON...

AND WILL
BE EXECUTED
RIGHT AWAY.

I GUESS IT'LL
BE IMPOSSIBLE...



TO PROTECT
HER FOREVER...

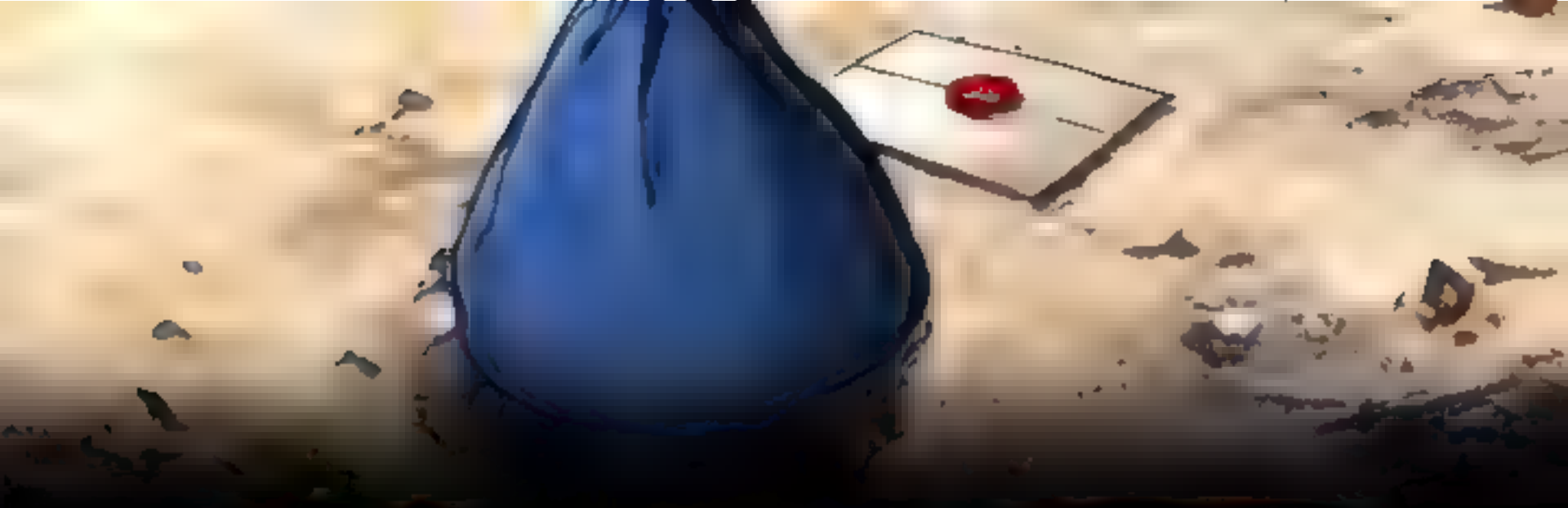


THE KING...






DEFINITELY
TRIED TO HELP
OUR EXPEDITION.




I'LL JUST
HAVE TO
HOPE...

THE KING


A person wearing a dark, hooded cloak stands in the center of the frame. The hood is pulled up, covering their head. The person's face is pale with minimal features. The background is a simple, light-colored wall with a dark vertical line on the right side. Two large, circular, glowing speech bubbles with spiky, sun-like borders are present. One is in the top right corner, and the other is in the bottom left corner, partially overlapping the person's cloak.

DIDN'T DO
THAT...

TO SIMPLY
STRENGTHEN
HIS ROYAL
AUTHORITY...




AND GIVE
MANA BACK TO
THE MAGICIANS WHO
ARE ON HIS SIDE...



BUT RATHER TO
TRULY SOLVE THIS
PROBLEM...


YOUR
MAJESTY.

A comic book panel with a dark, industrial background. In the upper center, a large white speech bubble contains the text "WE CAME BACK FROM THE EXPEDITION YOU HAVE ORDERED." The background is dimly lit, showing vertical structures on the left and a horizontal beam on the right. In the lower left, there are some small, dark, indistinct shapes that could be characters or machinery.

WE CAME
BACK FROM THE
EXPEDITION YOU
HAVE ORDERED.

HUH? YOU'RE
REALLY BACK.



A comic book panel featuring a large, circular speech bubble in the upper right quadrant. The background is split horizontally: the top half is a solid blue color, and the bottom half is a blurred, warm-toned background with shades of red, orange, and yellow. In the bottom left corner, a small portion of a character's head and a hand holding a sword hilt are visible. The speech bubble contains the following text:

NO ONE
EVER RETURNED
ONCE THEY WERE
SENT OFF TO THE
NORTH, SO I ASSUMED
THAT THIS WOULD BE
ANOTHER TRIP TO
YOUR DEATH.

WOW...

IT SEEMS
THAT YOU WERE
EXTREMELY
WORRIED, YOUR
MAJESTY.

BUT THE
SUMMONER THAT HAS
BEEN SELECTED FOR
THIS EXPEDITION...

HAHAHA

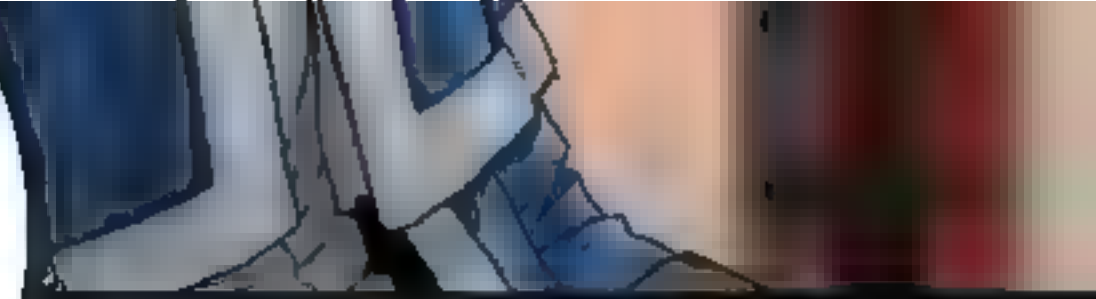
IS A TALENTED
ONE THAT EVEN OUR
ASSOCIATION HAS
BEEN INTERESTED
IN FOR A WHILE.

I TRULY
BELIEVED THAT
THEY'D RETURN,
YOUR MAJESTY.






AH, I KNEW IT.



LOOKS LIKE
THE SUCCESS OF
THIS EXPEDITION WAS
ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR
HARD WORK.



TH-THAT'S
RIDICULOUS...



IT'S SO HARD
TO OPEN MY
MOUTH...



EVEN WHEN
I'M LISTENING TO
THIS RIDICULOUS
CONVERSATION.

I GUESS
THIS IS...

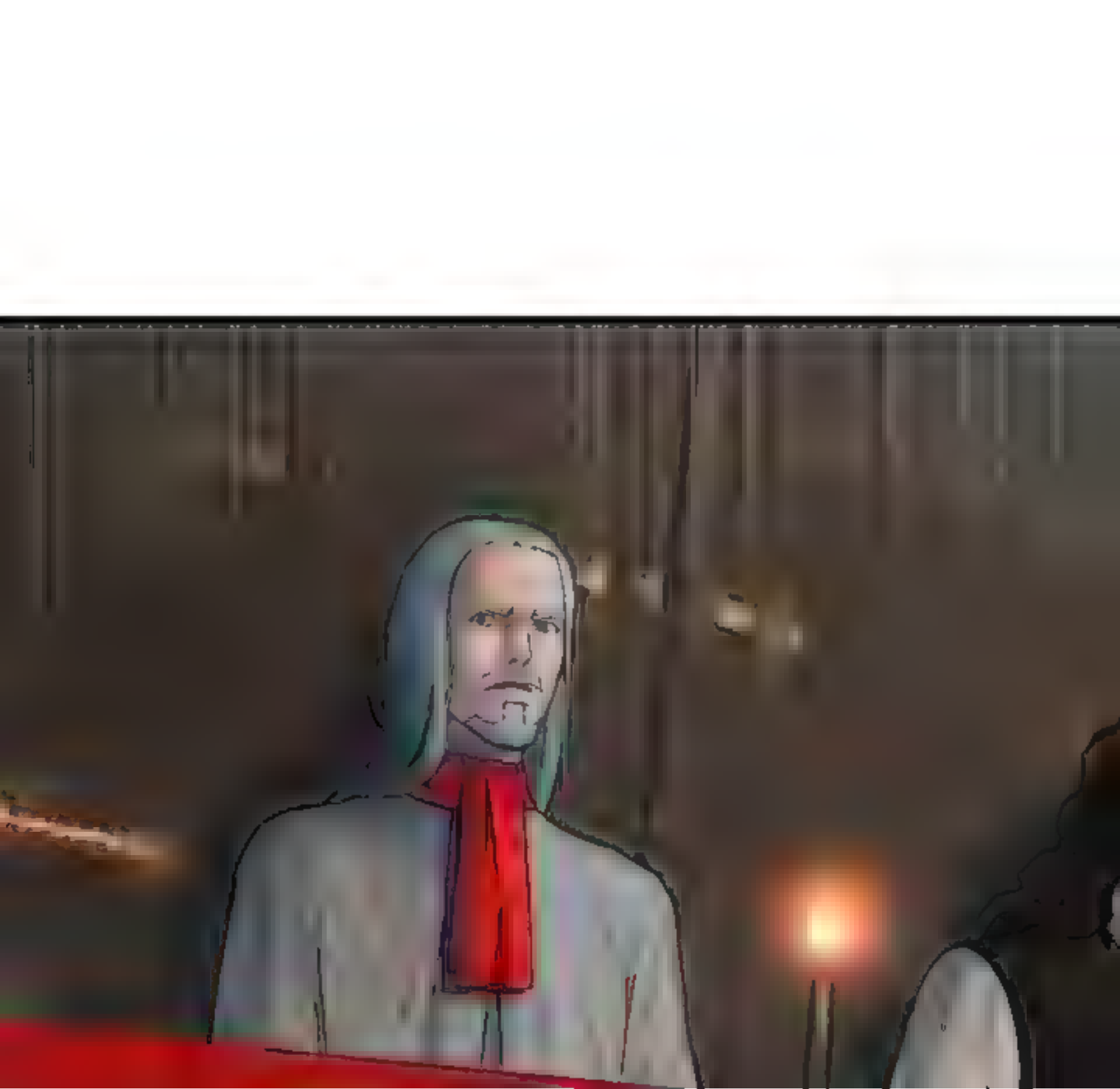
WHAT THE
DIFFERENCE IN
RANK MEANS...

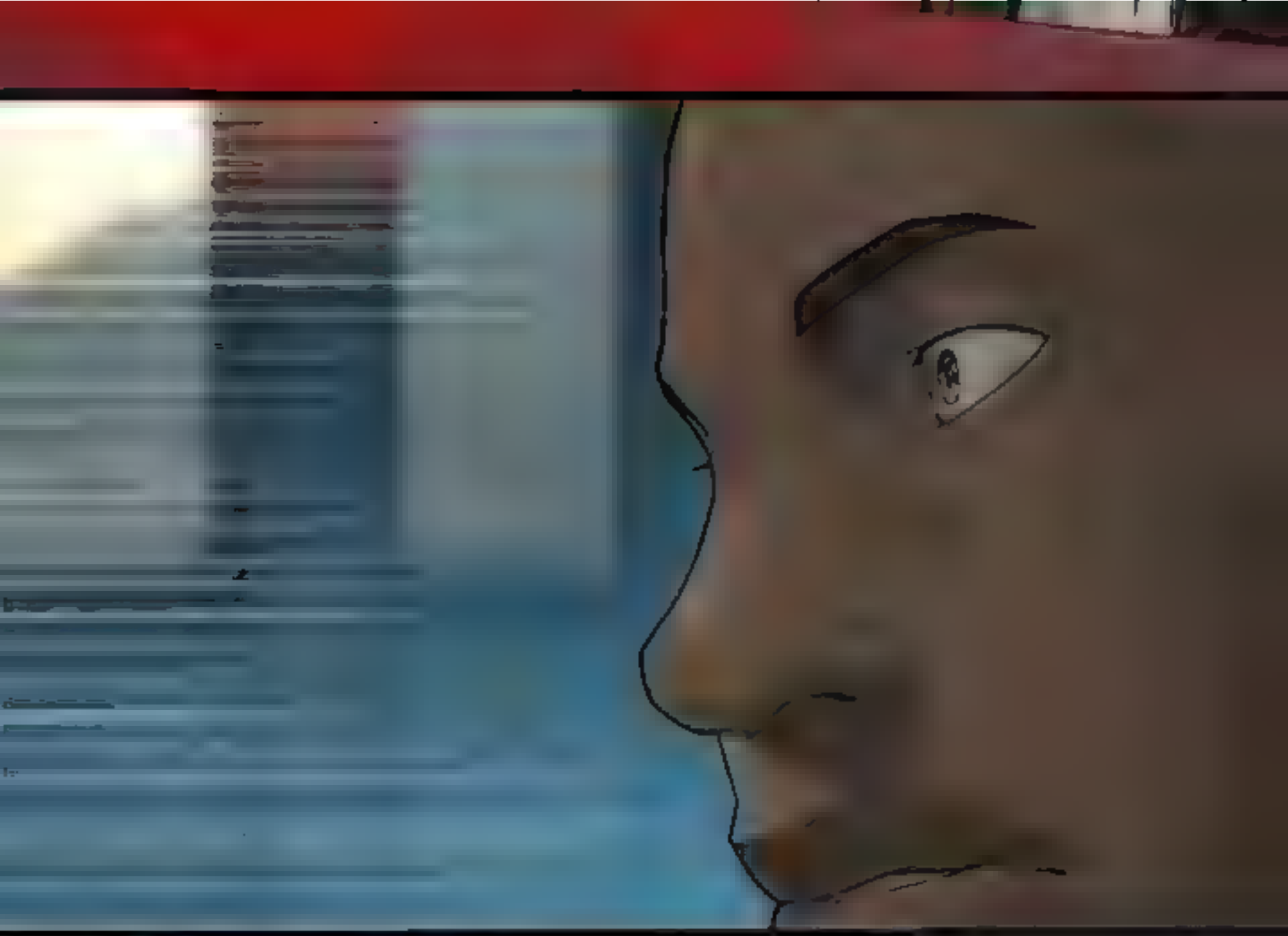
BULLSHIT.












L-LORD
YUTIBA...?

GASP





WH-WHO'S
HE?

IT LOOKS
LIKE HE'S THE
SUMMONED
CREATURE.

MURMUR

MURMUR



H-HEY,
SUMMONER!

WHAT IS
YOUR NAME...?


I-IT'S
MAINA...



IF YOUR
SUMMONED
CREATURE IS
CAPABLE OF
COMMUNICATING
WITH HUMANS...

THEN YOU
SHOULD'VE AT
LEAST TAUGHT
HIM OUR WAYS
AND COURTESY!




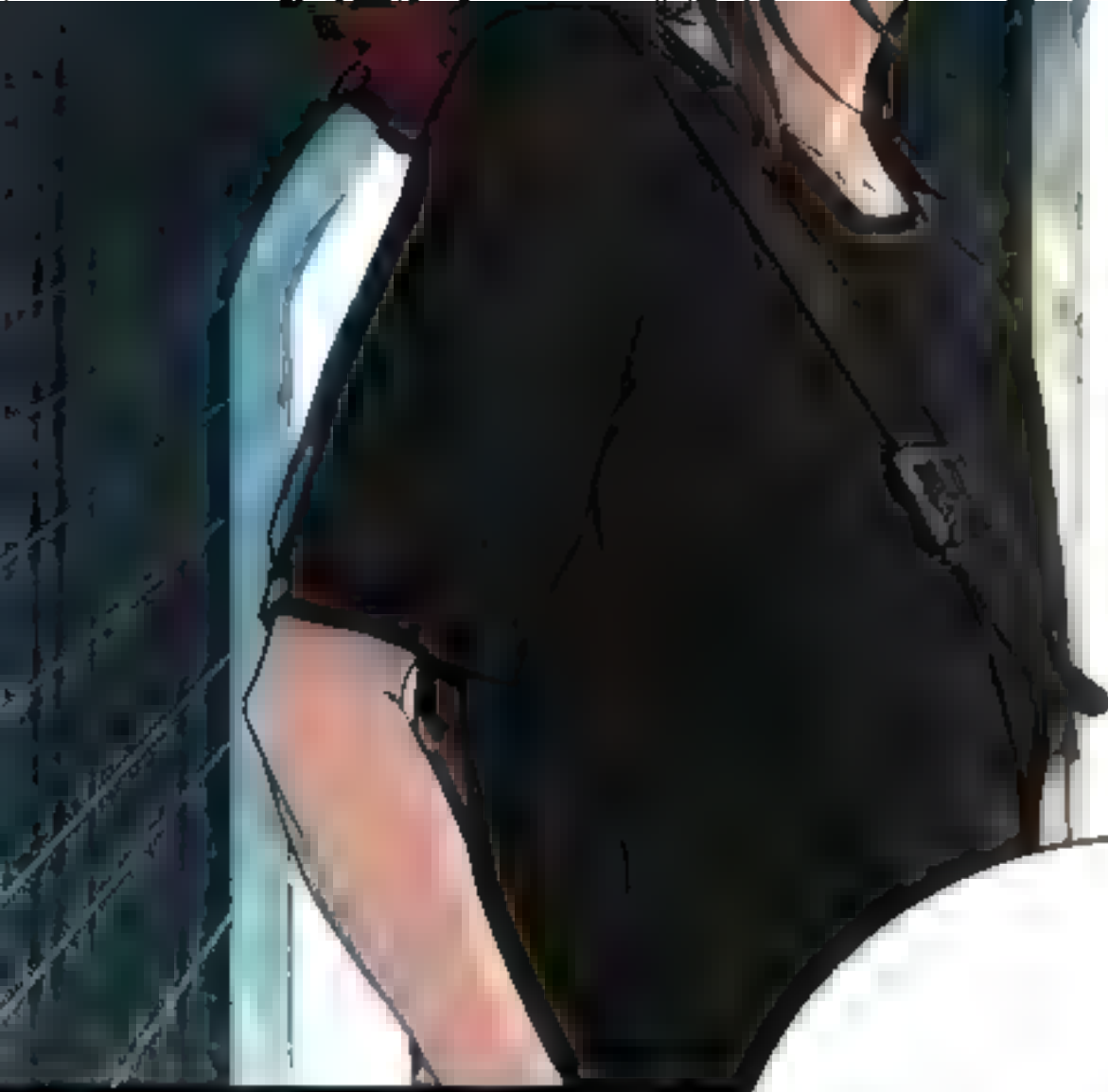
A red cylindrical object, possibly a container or a can, sits on a shelf. The background is a light gray wall with a dark horizontal line below the shelf.

WHAT
OUTRAGEOUS
ATTITUDE IS THIS
IN FRONT OF OUR
MAJESTY-

BAHAHAHA!

SERIOUSLY,
WHO'S TEACHING
WHO?!


A woman with dark hair is shown from the chest up, laughing heartily. Her mouth is wide open, and her eyes are squeezed shut. She is wearing a dark, textured garment. The background is dark and indistinct.



DO YOU
REALLY THINK
SOME PLUNK THAT
WASN'T ABLE TO
SUMMON ANYTHING
IN HER LIFE...

CAN JUST
CONTROL SOMEONE LIKE
ME AFTER SUMMONING
ME PURELY OUT OF
DUMB LUCK?





IF YOU
CAN'T CONTROL
IT, DE-SUMMON
HIM NOW!

IT IS NOT
ALLOWED TO
USE SUMMONING
MAGIC INSIDE
THE PALACE
WALLS-

(P)

SCENE 11

I THINK
IT'S FINE.

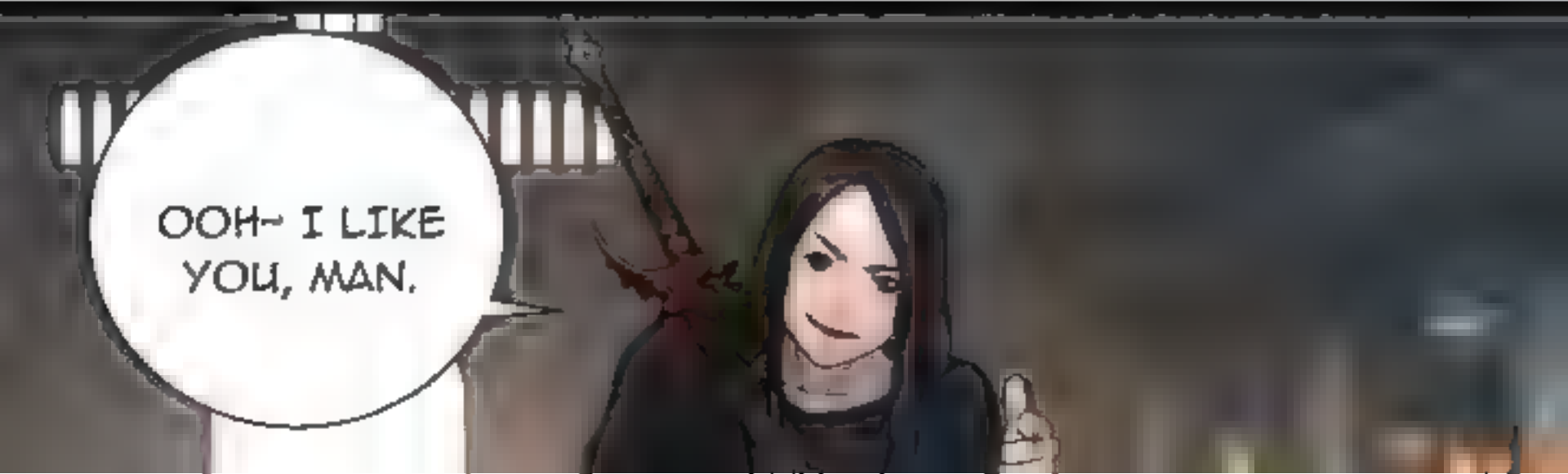


INTERESTING.





CONTINUE,
SUMMONED
CREATURE.



OOH~ I LIKE
YOU, MAN.




THE TRUTH
IS, WE WERE
STOPPED WITH
TOO MANY NEEDLESS
INTERRUPTIONS ON
OUR EXPEDITION.

BUT THE
FUNNY THING
IS THOSE PEOPLE
WHO STOPPED
US WERE...



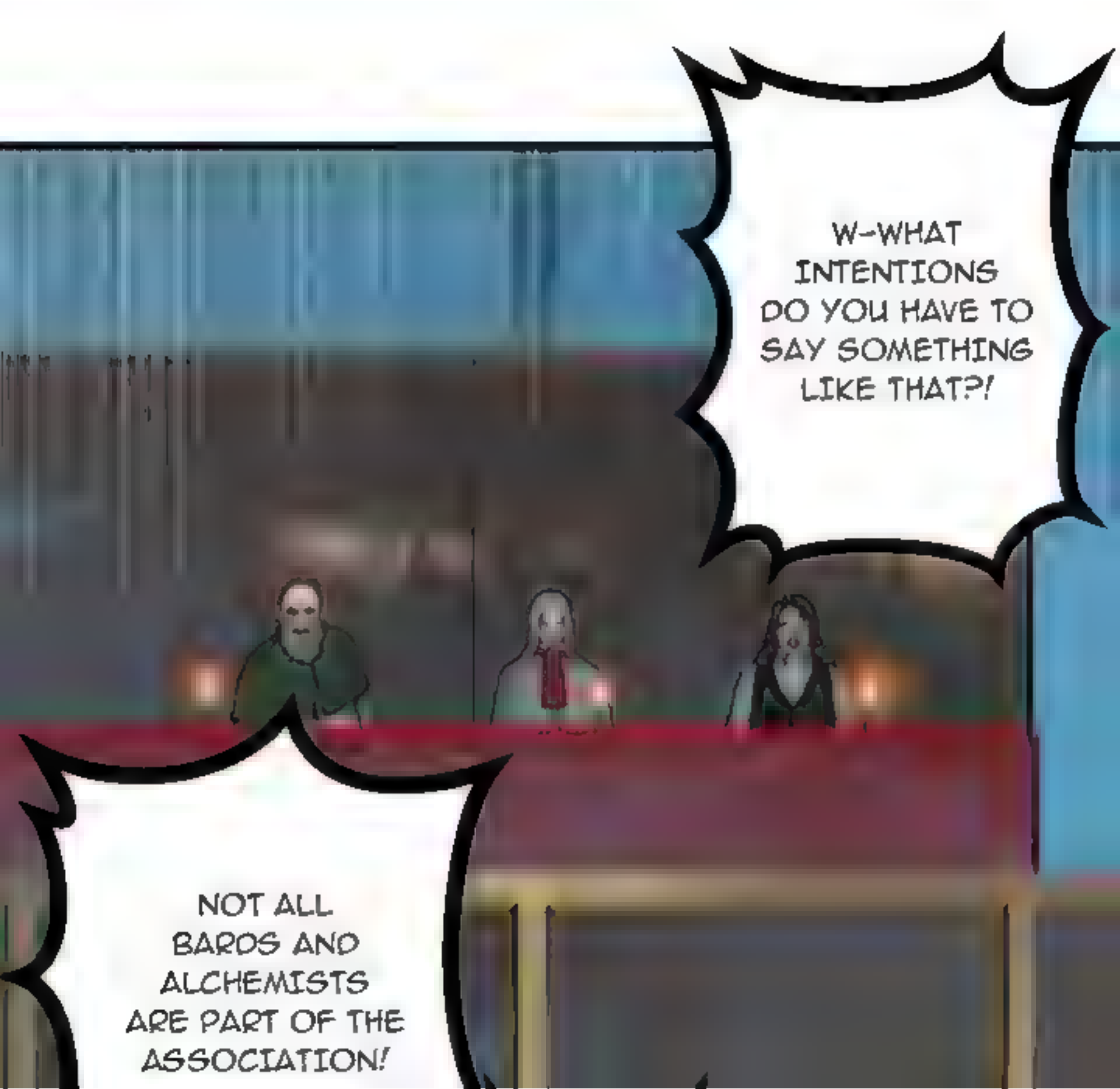
BARDS...

OR ALCHEMISTS.




I HEARD
THOSE PEOPLE
WERE MANAGED
BY THE DUKES
HERE...

SO WOULD
YOU CARE TO
EXPLAIN WHY
THE HELL THAT
HAPPENED?

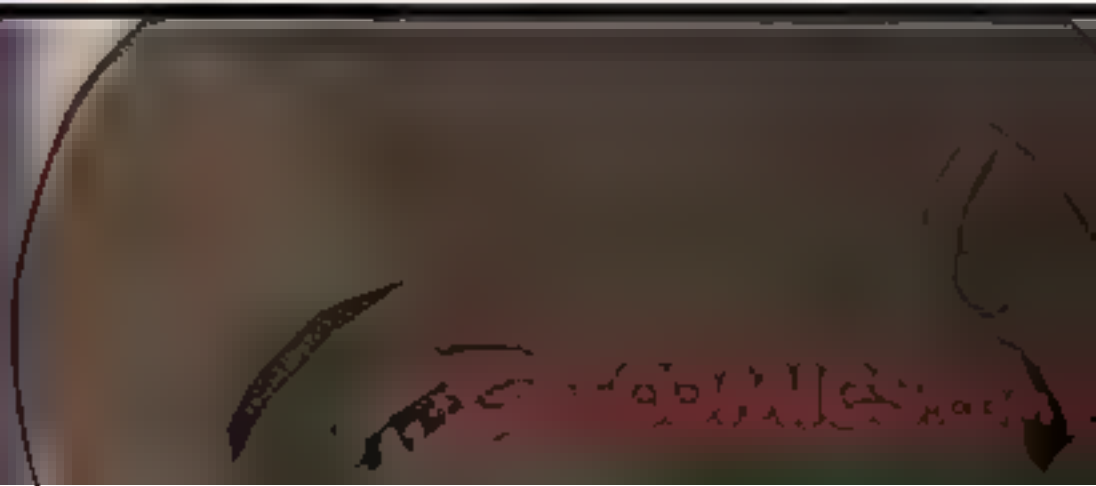
A comic panel depicting a scene at night. In the foreground, three characters are visible from the chest up, standing on a red carpeted stage. On the left is a man with a beard wearing a green robe. In the center is a person with long white hair and a red garment. On the right is a woman with long dark hair wearing a black dress. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some lights and architectural elements. Two large speech bubbles are overlaid on the scene. One speech bubble, located in the upper right, contains the text 'W-WHAT INTENTIONS DO YOU HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?'. The other speech bubble, located in the lower left, contains the text 'NOT ALL BARDS AND ALCHEMISTS ARE PART OF THE ASSOCIATION!'.

W-WHAT
INTENTIONS
DO YOU HAVE TO
SAY SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?!


NOT ALL
BARDS AND
ALCHEMISTS
ARE PART OF THE
ASSOCIATION!



WE CANNOT
HELP BUT THINK
YOUR WORDS HAVE
IMPURE INTENTIONS!



THE COUNTRY IS
A MESS



I SEE... SO
HAVE I BEEN
MISTAKEN?




AS YOU ALREADY
HEARD, THIS GIRL'S
SUMMONING SKILLS
ARE USELESS.


BUT NOW
HE'S TELLING
YOU THAT SHE'S
A TALENTED ONE
THEY WERE ALWAYS
INTERESTED IN?

IF THAT'S TRUE...



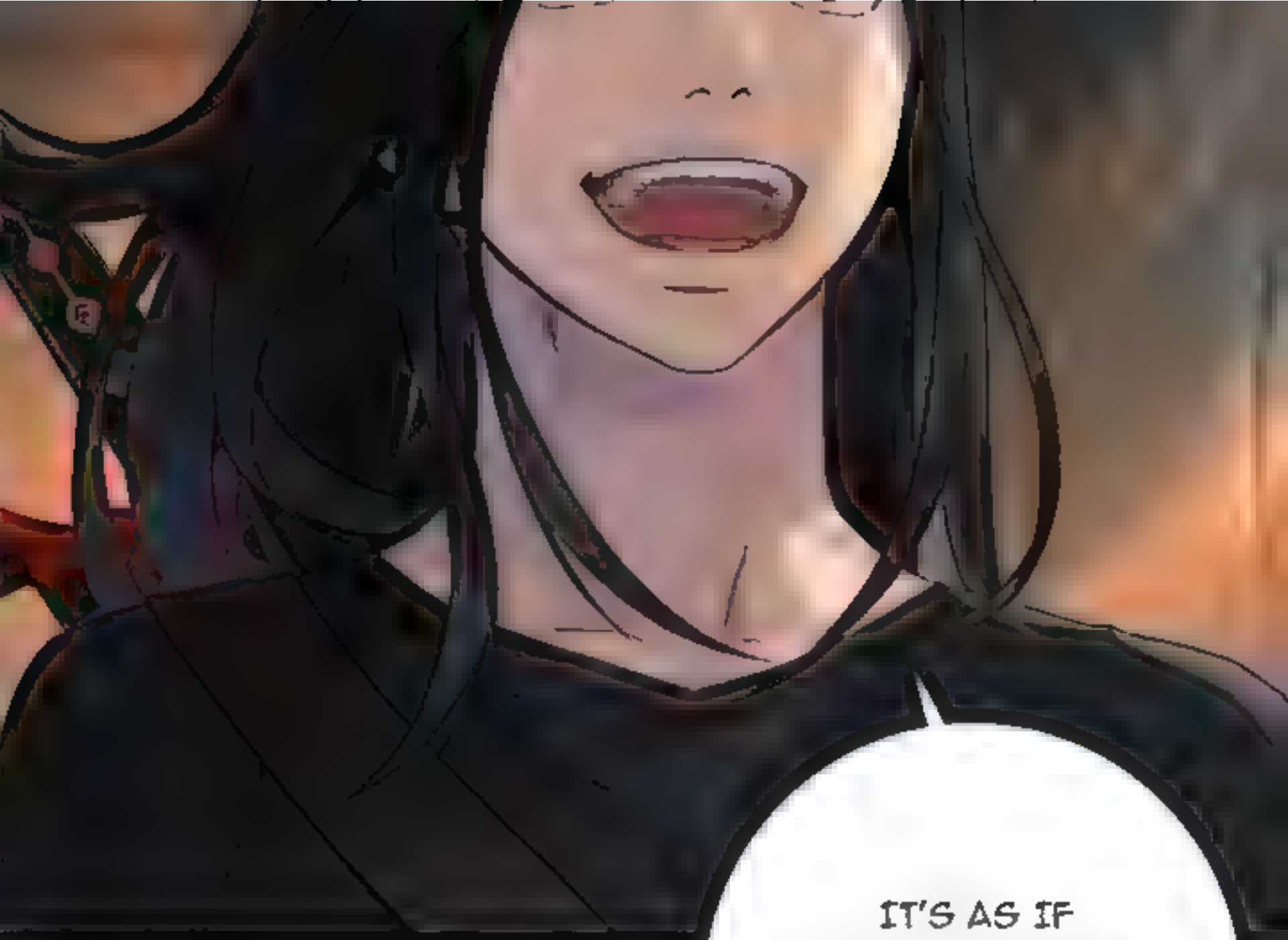


HOW COME
YOU DON'T EVEN
KNOW HER
NAME?



THEY WERE
LUCKY THAT I WAS
THE ONE WHO WAS
SUMMONED...

BECAUSE
THESE TWO PLUNKS
WOULD'VE DIED ON
THEIR WAY TO SOLVE THE
NATION'S MOST IMPORTANT
MATTER.



IT'S AS IF
SOMEONE SET UP
THE WHOLE THING
SO THE EXPEDITION
COULD FAIL.

PLEASE
TELL ME I'M
WRONG~

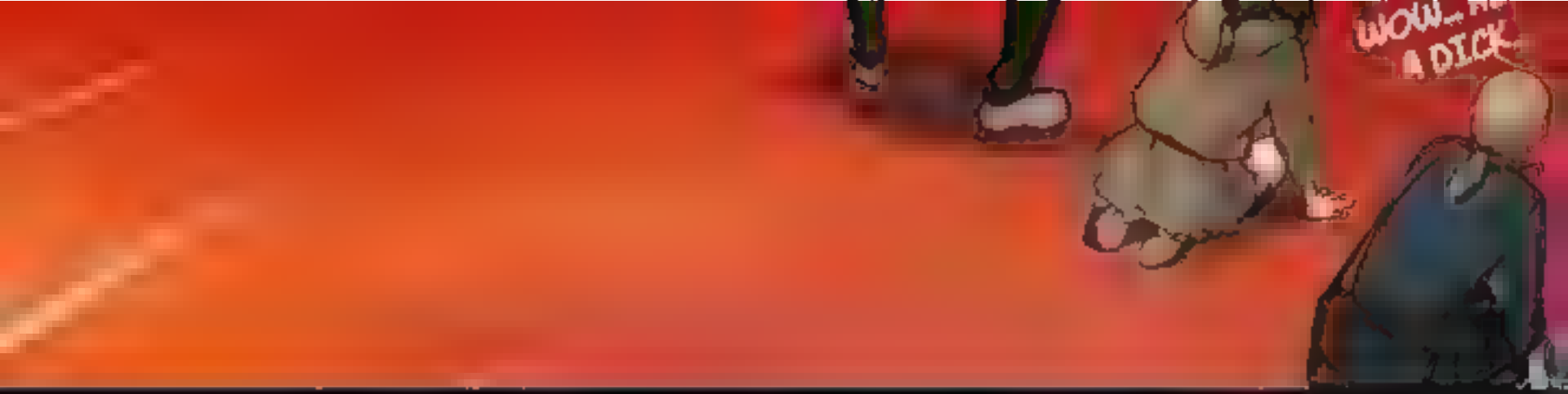
OH COME
ON, PLEASE!

SHAKE

SHAKE

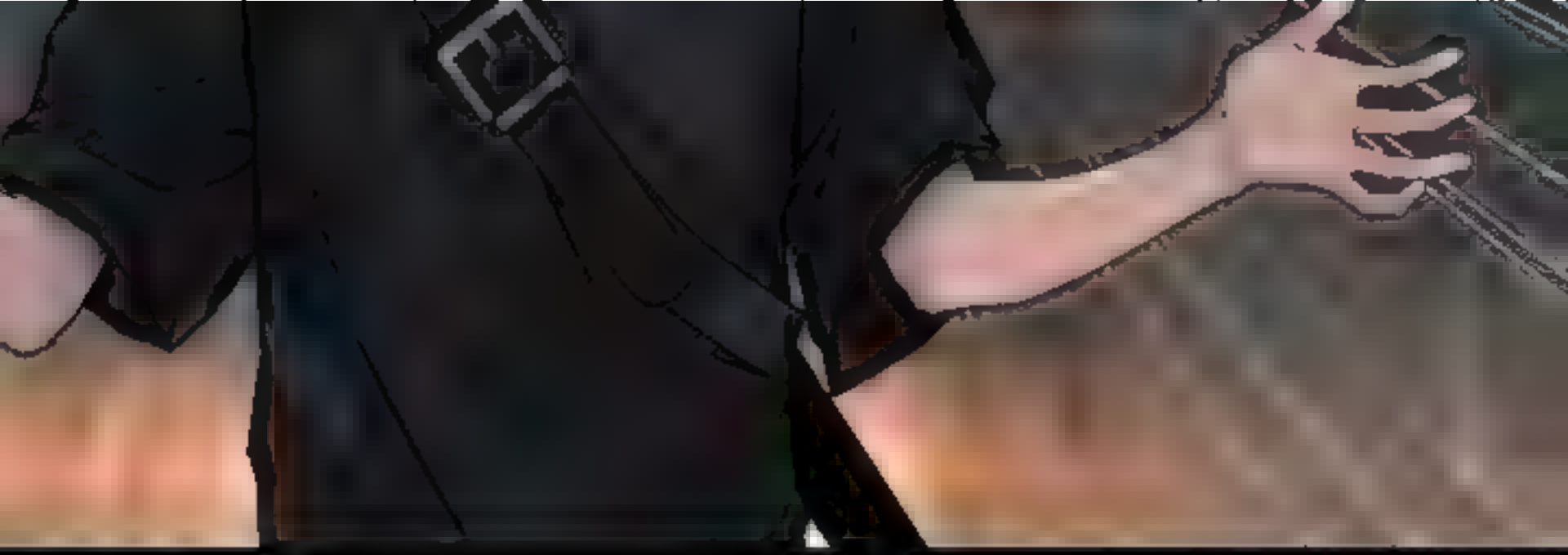
LORD YUTUBA,
YOU'RE BEING
RUDE

YES





HOW WEIRD!!!



I HEARD THAT
YOUR DAUGHTER'S
A PRETTY TALENTED
SMITH.


SUMMONER!

I HEARD SHE
CAN SUMMON THE

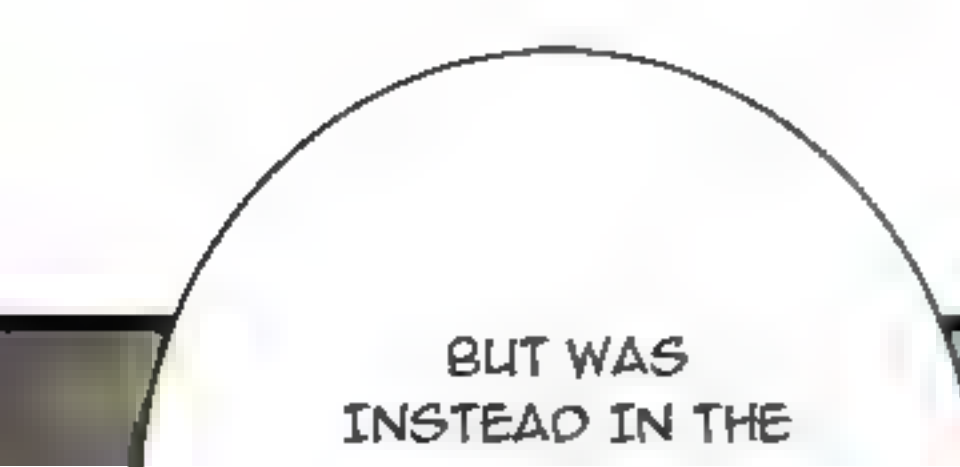
GODDESS OF STORMS
AND CONTROL THUNDER
AND LIGHTNING AND
SHIT!

HOW COME
SOMEONE SO
TALENTED AS
YOUR DAUGHTER...



A close-up of a character's upper body. They are wearing a white lab coat or uniform with a red cape or collar. A speech bubble is positioned above the cape.

DIDN'T GO
ON THIS
EXPEDITION...

A character's head is shown inside a white circle, which is part of a larger speech bubble. The character has dark hair and is looking slightly to the right.

BUT WAS
INSTEAD IN THE

GROUP OF PEOPLE
WHO AMBUSHED
US ON OUR WAY
BACK HERE?

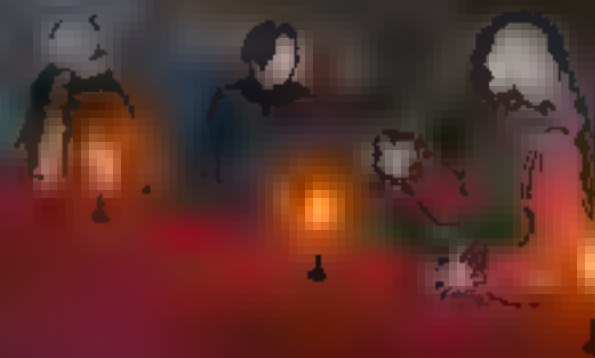




IS IT STILL A
MISUNDERSTANDING?

MURMUR

MURMUR





A comic panel featuring a character with dark skin and a shaved head, looking upwards with a concerned expression. The character is positioned in the lower foreground. Behind them is a large, textured stone wall with horizontal layers. A speech bubble originates from the wall, containing the text "DUKE KALLINIK.". The background above the wall is a plain, light-colored sky.

DUKE KALLINIK.

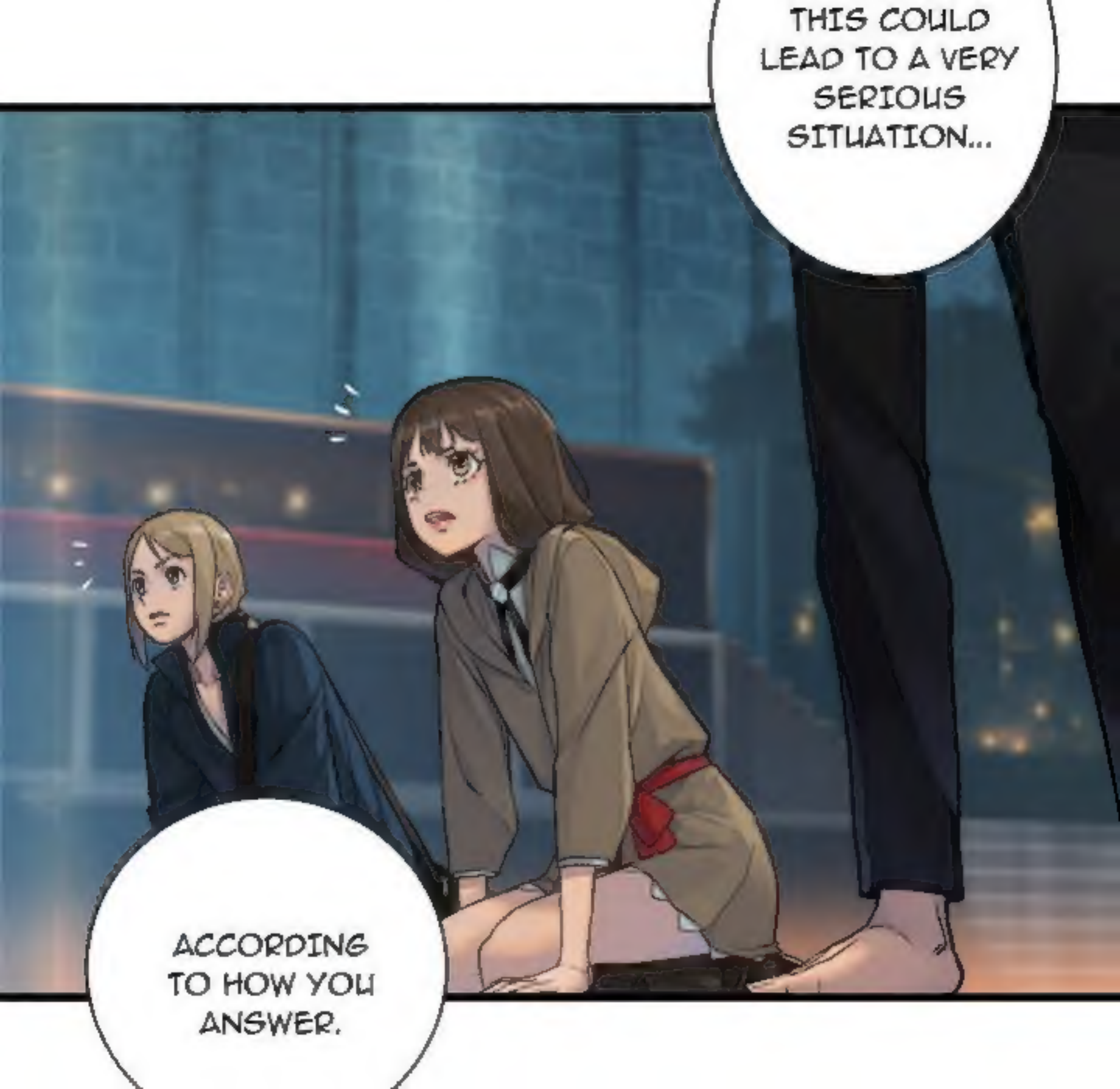


IS WHAT HE
SAID ALL TRUE?

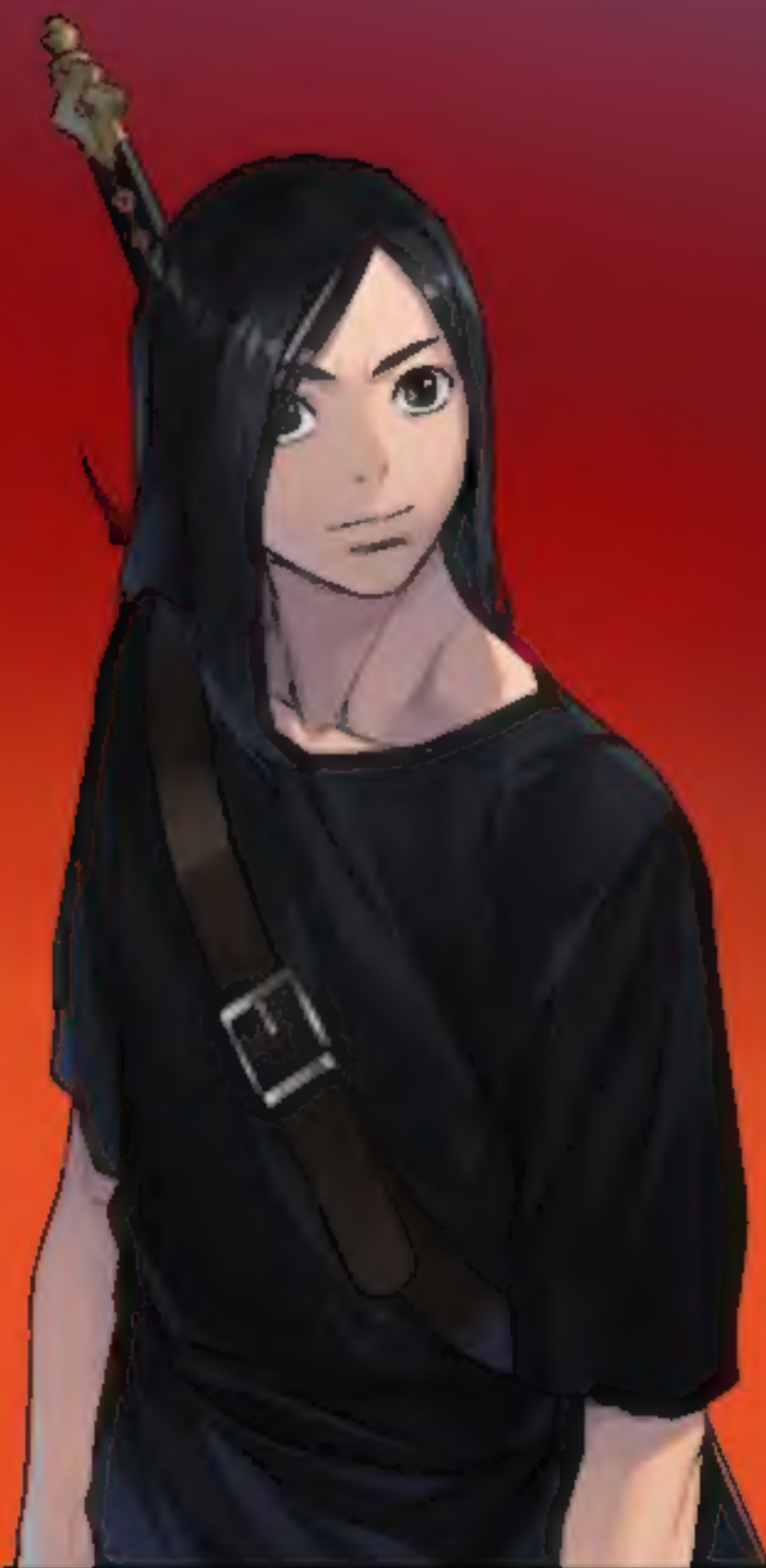
CHAPTER 1

THIS COULD
LEAD TO A VERY
SERIOUS
SITUATION...

ACCORDING
TO HOW YOU
ANSWER.







HER SUMMON